

period which lies beyond the resurrection. On this side God's children mourn and weep and fast.

### TRIAL AND TEMPTATION

MARCUS A. WITTER

A man who owned a fine, spirited young horse was one day driving him along the railroad where the engines were switching back and forth and where all was stir and commotion. It was interesting to note the animal's confidence in his master. When a new sound or a strange object would frighten him a word or two from the owner who had a firm hold on the reins always quieted him. The owner purposely drove him quite near to the engines to accustom him to them so he would not be afraid of them. At last he drove the animal up to within a few feet of one of the engines, speaking to him in firm quieting tones whenever the horse showed any signs of fear. When he was right at the side of the engine the engineer, perhaps purposely, opened a valve allowing a jet of steam to shoot out almost at the horse's feet. The animal made a leap to the side almost upsetting the buggy and it was with difficulty that the owner succeeded in quieting him, while the engineer roared with laughter.

As I went on my way I thought of what I had seen and this thought came to me:—In the owner of the horse we have an illustration of God's trying us and in the engineer an illustration of Satan tempting us.

Satan does all in his power to frighten us out of the path of duty. He tempts, he threatens, he tries to coax, and he tries to force, and to frighten us from the narrow way. And all this time God is firmly, lovingly guiding us and keeping us right. His hand may lead us where we are surrounded by sin, he may place us in the midst of trials and of opportunities to sin. He may permit Satan to tempt us sore but like the true Master that he is, he is always ready with a firm loving hand to deliver us from evil.

### PETER IN STORM

J. C. CASSEL

*Continued from No. 2.*

Peter knew more about salvation the morning after the struggle in the tempest than he had ever known before; he had an experience, he had a testimony to give. Very often prayer and testimony meetings are dry, not interesting because there are no rich experiences; very often the testimonies given are simply the hackneyed, rehearsed utterances of others, or the stereotyped phrases so common in Methodist class-meetings, where every one is expected to respond to the call of the leader. If we were ever conscious of having been lost as Peter was on that memorable night, and then have become equally conscious that we have been saved by grace divine as Peter was, then we will have an interesting testimony to give, and we will embrace every opportunity to give it for the glory of God, and the good of men.

"But when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid." While he "saw Jesus only" he did gloriously, but as soon as he saw the wind blow and the waves roll he began to sink; how human Peter was! just like the rest of us; it is difficult to live above the conditions and circumstances that surround us.

I shall never forget my own experience when I confessed Christ and was baptized, and thus became a member of the Christian church; it was a very happy experience; I had asked the dear Lord to let me come to him, I had received the gracious invitation "Come." I was walking on the sea that night, and doing nobly, but imagine my feelings the next day, when the waves of sin rolled over me with apparently more fury than before, possibly I was only more conscious of them because I had expected the storm to cease; I had expected a change of nature to take place both without and within in harmony with my change of heart and purpose, but was disappointed for the time being. A change of nature is a blessed possibility within a Christian's life, but it is rarely simultaneous with the change of relationship from a lost to a saved state.

Peter was not saved *from* the storm, but he was sustained and saved *in* it; after he was safe in the boat again the storm was rebuked and the tempest ceased. This is God's way of saving men; if he would save us *from* the storms, remove the trials and temptations we would soon cease to be conscious of the need of saving power.

Peter became scared because the wind was boisterous. I suppose he imagined that if the wind was not blowing and waves not rolling, that if the sea was nice and calm and smooth he could walk on it without the Master's help. I sometimes wish that Jesus had rebuked the wind before Peter started just to take the conceit out of him that he could walk alone on a calm sea. That in the way of our human nature, in health, in prosperity, in the peaceful surroundings of the home circle, among Christian friends, when the wind is simply blowing a gentle zephyr, and the sea is calm we do not feel the need of help, and yet if God was not mindful of us, and the Holy Spirit was not watching over us and interceding for us with groanings even that cannot be uttered the very last one of us would go down into the bottomless sea of despair. If God did not save in the storms of life we would not be conscious of saving power. Imagine the feelings of Peter safe in the arms of Jesus while the tempest was blowing. How many are the wrecks along the way! Many enter the church and walk well for a while, but a storm of adversity comes in the form of personal differences, or offenses, instead of adjusting them according to the *Word*. So-called Christians will fight, call each other ugly names and become malicious toward each other instead of going to Jesus as Peter did thru the storm and tempest; some will leave the church altogether. Some will

change their church relationship and a good many too contrary to belong to any church start up, or go to independent missions and then call themselves *outcomers*, often with much pride and pretense. Jesus once said, "It must needs be that offenses come, but woe be to that man by whom they come; it were better that a mill stone were hanged about his neck and be cast into the bottom of the sea." Storms and tempest, trials and tests must come, partly to make manifest the wolves and hypocrites in the churches, and partly to develop—to "calm sea" Christians—the need of a Savior, and partly to test his own true followers.

The disciples on that memorable night did not moan, or lament, or murmur, find fault, or get sour because Jesus had sent them alone upon the sea, they honestly tried to outride storm and reach the shore. Jesus, conscious of His responsibility for their being in it and seeing the honesty of their purpose, came to their relief after they became fully conscious of their own failure. They had to be undone that he could do for them.

While the disciples failed that night it must not be supposed that they were hopeless; it was Jesus that had commanded them to go across the sea to the other side; they knew of His power, and had every reason to expect Him to see them safely across; they had just witnessed the marvelous feeding of the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes which no doubt had made a deep impression upon them, but if the disciples had occasion to trust the Lord, we have greater cause for confidence. Since then He has been crucified, resurrected, and received back to heaven again; moreover the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father has come, and has verified His word, and exercises the promised power so that millions have been saved and kept by His grace, consequently we have nothing to fear, if we believe the record. We can go where He leads or sends us. Storms will come and storms will go but the word says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He did not forget his disciples that night while he was communing with the Father neither will he forget them now while at the right hand of God. The hairs of our heads are numbered, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice. The gold is the Lord's and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

We may be disposed to smile at Peter's dismay, but who of us would do as well under similar circumstances. You may say, I would not allow my impulses to rob me of my reason, there was no occasion for Peter to venture out upon the water as he did, but just consider what he would have lost without that experience and what the world would have missed without it. The whole plan of salvation and almost every human experience thru the entire dispensation of grace is as in a nut-shell in the few words giving an account of that night's experience. Just for a moment consider that text again, "But when he saw the sea boisterous he was afraid."